

Ten Thousand Eyes: The Story of Ἄργος Μυριωπός

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THE MYTH OF ARGUS was well known in antiquity, to judge from sixth- and fifth-century literature and art. Its basic constituents are as follows: when Io was turned into a heifer by Zeus, the titan Argus was appointed by Hera as her guard, and while on this duty he was killed by Hermes.¹ The most conspicuous and unusual feature of Argus is the number of his eyes, which in different sources ranges between three and several thousand. The purpose of this paper is to make a new suggestion regarding the origin of the motif of the myriad-eyed cowherd.

1. Let us remind ourselves of the relevant sources. In Aesch. *Supp.* the story of Io is treated in the stichomythia between the chorus of Danaids and Pelasgus, the king of Argos; Io's guard is mentioned at 303–305, described as πανόπτης οἰοβουκόλος, “all-seeing cowherd of one [heifer].”² A somewhat more detailed description is in [Aesch.] *PV*: in her monody Io calls Argus a “myriad-eyed cowherd” (568, μυριωπὸν ... βούταν) and later an “earth-born herdsman, staring with his many eyes” (677–679, βουκόλος δὲ γηγενῆς ... πυκνοῖς ὄσσοις δεδορκώς). Bacchylides, too, was familiar with the myth: in his poem about Io (19.19–25) he describes Argus as “looking every way with tireless eyes” (ὄμμασι βλέποντα πάντοθεν ἀκαμάτοις)

¹ For variants of the myth of Io see L. G. Mitchell, “Euboean Io,” *CQ* 51 (2001) 339–352; a characteristically useful overview is provided by T. Gantz, *Early Greek Myth I* (Baltimore/London 1993) 199–202.

² According to schol. Γ on Ar. *Eccl.* 80 (τὴν τοῦ πανόπτου διφθέραν ἐνημμένους), Argus had the name Πανόπτης in Sophocles' *Inachus* as well (fr.281).

and as “unresting and sleepless” (ἄκοιτον ἄϋπνον). From the description of the battle between the Argives and Thebans in Eur. *Phoen.* 1115–1118 we learn that in the center of Hippomedon’s shield was the all-seeing Argus, with eyes dappling his body (στικτοῖς Πανόπτην ὄμμασιν δεδορκότα), some opening in concert with rising stars and some closing with setting ones. It is this image of Argus whose entire body is covered with multiple eyes that remains the standard and popular one in classical literature.³

The earliest iconographic evidence for Argus covered with many eyes likewise comes from the fifth century. The evidence includes over a dozen artefacts, for instance a red-figure pelike in the Louvre inscribed ΠΑΝΟΠ[ΤΗΣ] (ca. 470–460),⁴ a red-figure hydria in Boston featuring Argus clad in a lion skin (ca. 475–450),⁵ or a fragmented black-figure lekythos (ca. 480).⁶ The earliest instance of many-eyed Argus is on a red-figure amphora in Hamburg dated ca. 490–480.⁷

³ Cf. Dionysius of Samos *FGHist* 15 F 1, τὸ σῶμα ὅλον ὀμματῶσθαι; Mosch. 2.57, τὸν ἄπνον ἐξαρεῖτα ἀκοιμήτοισι κεκασμένος ὀφθαλμοῖσι; Ov. *Met.* 1.625. Ὀφθαλμοὶ δ’ οὐκ ἀριθμητοί (Cratinus fr.161) see n.21 below.

⁴ Louvre G 229, Siren Painter, *ARV²* 289.3 (*LIMC* “Io I,” no. 25).

⁵ MFA 08.417, Agrigento Painter, *ARV²* 579.84 (*LIMC* “Io I,” no. 8).

⁶ Bibliothèque Nationale, Dép. des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques 302 (4790), Pholos group, *ABV* 572.1 (*LIMC* “Io I,” no. 23). These and several other images have been collected in N. Yalouris, “Io I,” *LIMC* V (1990) 665–669; see also his important paper “Le mythe d’Io. Les transformations d’Io dans l’iconographie et la littérature grecques,” in L. Kahil et al. (eds.), *Iconographie classique et identités régionales* (Athens 1986) 3–23. Yalouris’ discussion is understandably focused on Io, and his collection is therefore incomplete in respect to Argus. One may add several depictions of many-eyed Argus slain by Hermes, for instance a red-figure pelike of the first half of the fifth century (*CVA* 7. *Paul Getty Museum, Malibu* fasc. 7, 16–17, pl. 340.1) or a red-figure crater ca. 475–425 (*CVA* *Roma, Mus. Naz. Etrusco di Villa Giulia* fasc. 4, 9–10, fig.2, pl. 5.1–2).

⁷ Hamburg, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe 1966.34, Eucharides Painter, *Paralipomena* 347.8 (*LIMC* “Io I,” no. 4).

2. And yet, this conception of Argus' physiognomy is not the only one known to art historians: there are also traces of another tradition in which Argus was a Janus-type figure with four eyes, two on each of his faces. This is the way Argus is depicted on a black-figure Attic amphora in London, dated ca. 540.⁸ The same image appears on a damaged black-figure lekythos at Yale (ca. 525–475).⁹ Two-faced Argus is thus the earlier iconographic conception which only rarely recurs in the fifth century.¹⁰

Precisely this version is found in a scholion to Eur. *Phoen.* 1116, quoting from the epic *Aegimius* (Hes. fr.230 Most = fr.294 M.-W.):

καὶ οἱ ἐπίσκοπον Ἄργον ἴει κρατερόν τε μέγαν τε
 τέτρασιν ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ὀρώμενον ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα,
 ἀκάματον δέ οἱ ᾤρσε θεὰ μένος, οὐδέ οἱ ὕπνος
 πῆπτεν ἐπὶ βλεφάροις, φυλακὴν δ' ἔχεν ἔμπεδον αἰεὶ.

And [Hera] set a watcher upon her [Io], great and strong Argus,
 who with four eyes looks every way.

And the goddess stirred in him unwearying strength:
 sleep never fell upon his eyes, but he kept sure watch always.

Aegimius, a poem about the primordial king of the Dorians befriended by Heracles, is variously attributed by our sources to

⁸ British Museum B 164, school of Exekias, *ABV* 148.2 (*LIMC* “Io I,” no. 1).

⁹ Yale University 116, manner of Haimon Painter, *ABV* 550.317; *Add.*² 135 (*LIMC* “Io I,” no. 2).

¹⁰ Red-figure Boeotian skyphos: Athens, National Archaeological Museum 4295 (1407), ca. 430, Painter of the Athens Argos Cup, *LIMC* “Io I,” no. 28; for a drawing see R. Engelmann, “Die Jo-Sage,” *JdI* 18 (1903) 37–58, at 43. A combination of two faces and eyes covering Argus' entire body is found on a red-figure crater in Genoa: Museo Civico di Archeologia Ligure 1145, ca. 475–425, group of Polygnotus, *ARV*² 1054.48 = *LIMC* “Io I,” no. 34. It is unclear whether the curious two-faced figure on top of Zeus' scepter on a black-figure hydria in Würzburg (ca. 500; *ABV* 268.28) is another instance of Argus *bifrons*: the conjoined profiles here are respectively bearded and beardless, exactly like those on the Boeotian skyphos (see E. Simon, “Aphrodite Pandemos auf attischen Münzen,” *SNR* 49 [1970] 5–19, at 7–8).

either Hesiod or a certain Cercops of Miletus.¹¹ Hesiod's authorship is supported by ancient testimonia that he composed a version of the myth about Io, Argus, and Hermes.¹² Little is known about the other contender, Cercops, but as a far more obscure figure he *a priori* has a better chance to be the true author: on the one hand the tradition about his purported rivalry with Hesiod (Arist. fr.75) would otherwise be incomprehensible, and on the other the ancient attribution of *Aegimius* to Hesiod is not unexpected since the general tendency would be to ascribe to Hesiod any ancient hexameter poem that did not belong to the Homeric school.¹³

Aegimius is usually dated to the sixth century, but given the fragmentary nature of the evidence, it is very hard to put a time stamp on the poem. According to Plutarch, Pisistratus expelled the line about Theseus' adulterous passion for Aigle from the Hesiodic corpus (Plut. *Thes.* 20 = fr.235a Most = 298 M.-W.); if this gives a reliable *terminus ante quem* for the composition of the

¹¹ See E. Cingano, "The Hesiodic Corpus," in F. Montanari et al. (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Hesiod* (Leiden 2009) 123–125.

¹² Heraclitus *QH* 72.10: Ἀργειφόντην ... τοὺς Ἡσιόδειους μύθους ... ὅτι τὸν βουκόλον Ἰοῦς ἐφόνευσεν, "Hesiod's tale that [Hermes] slew the herdsman of Io"; schol. bT *Il.* 2.103 (I 199 Erbse): τὸν γὰρ Ἰοῦς ἔρωτα οὐκ οἶδεν ὁ ποιητής, πέπλασται δὲ τοῖς νεωτέροις τὰ περὶ τὸν Ἄργον, "the poet [Homer] did not know of love for Io, but the story of Argus was composed by later [writers]"; Hsch. α 8771: πρῶτος δὲ Ἡσιόδος ἔπλασε τὰ περὶ τὸν Δία καὶ τὴν Ἰώ, "Hesiod was the first to compose the story of Zeus and Io" (cf. fr.72 Most = fr.124 M.-W.). One of the reasons the ancient scholars were inclined to attribute the verses cited above (and therefore the entire poem *Aegimius*) to Hesiod must have been that Hesiod employs Ἀργεῖφόντης as an epithet of Hermes (*Op.* 68, 77, 84); this is of course a very shaky argument, and the connection between Ἄργος and Ἀργεῖφόντης is in fact illusory, see M. L. West, *Hesiod. Works and Days* (Oxford 1978) 368–369; F. Bader, *La langue des dieux, ou l'hermétisme des poètes indo-européens* (Pisa 1989) 27.

¹³ One possible argument against Hesiod's authorship is the construction ἀκάματον μένος, otherwise not attested in the epic language: this phrase seems to be a reworking of πυρὸς μένος ἀκαμάτοιο (*Theog.* 563), and it is possible that the poet of *Aegimius* no longer understood the meaning of ἀκάματον πῦρ, a prominent verse-final formula in early epic.

verse and if Cercops was its real author (a possibility suggested by Ath. 557A = fr.235b Most), he would have composed his poetry in the first half of the sixth century.¹⁴

This date is compatible with the theory advanced by N. Robertson,¹⁵ who ingeniously argued that *Aegimius* is the much-discussed lost epic poem about Heracles' descent to Hades:¹⁶ in Robertson's reconstruction, Cercops presented Heracles describing to King Aegimius his travel to the Underworld (the story of Io and Argus would have its place in a pageant of heroines, typical for νέκυια-narratives). The main reason for equating Cercops' *Aegimius* with the lost epic *katabasis* of Heracles was that Cercops was credited with 'Orphic' writings:¹⁷ according to Robertson, because the poem contained a description of a *katabasis*, it was adopted into the *Orphica* and an appropriate reputation was invented for its author.¹⁸ A *terminus ante quem* for the composition of the poem about Heracles' descent to Hades is provided by two black-figure cups of ca.

¹⁴ G. O. Huxley, *Greek Epic Poetry from Eumelos to Panyassis* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1969) 110.

¹⁵ N. Robertson, "Heracles' 'Catabasis'," *Hermes* 108 (1980) 274–300, at 279–280.

¹⁶ This poem (which influenced several poets and mythographers: Bacchyl. 5, Pind. fr.dub. 346 Maehler, Verg. *Aen.* 6.548–627, [Apollod.] *Bibl.* 2.5.12) was first detected by E. Norden, *Aeneis Buch VI³* (Stuttgart 1926), and later reconstructed by H. Lloyd-Jones, "Heracles at Eleusis: P. Oxy. 2622 and P.S.I. 1391," *Maia* N.S. 19 (1967) 206–229 (= *Greek Epic, Lyric and Tragedy* [Oxford 1990] 167–187); see recently J. Bremmer, "The Golden Bough: Orphic, Eleusinian, and Hellenistic-Jewish Sources of Virgil's Underworld in *Aeneid VI*," *Kernos* 22 (2009) 183–208.

¹⁷ According to *Suda* s.v. Ὀρφεύς, Cercops was a Pythagorean and an author of Ἱεροὶ λόγοι; the second line of the passage about Argus quoted above (τέτρασιν ... ἔνθα) was cited by the Neoplatonist Hermias as a verse from an Orphic theogony describing the androgynous deity Phanes (fr.132 Bernabé, *PEG* I.2 p.134; corr. II.3 p.446).

¹⁸ Cf. *OF* 1101T (*PEG* II.2): Cic. *Nat.D.* 1.107, *hoc Orphicum carmen Pythagorei ferunt cuiusdam fuisse Cercopis*; Epigenes even credited Cercops with a "Descent into Hades" (Clem. Al. *Strom.* 1.21.131.5).

560–550, where he is depicted fetching Cerberus.¹⁹ Now, if the Orphic Cercops is the same person as Cercops of Miletus, the poet of *Aegimius*, this *terminus ante quem* would put him in the early sixth century at the latest. This is an appealing theory, but other explanations for why *Aegimius* was incorporated into the Orphic theogony are possible.²⁰

To sum up the argument thus far, the *Aegimius* is in all likelihood a post-Hesiodic composition; arguments in favor of a sixth-century date are not very strong, but there no evidence whatever that would make a fifth century date more compelling. We can thus conclude that the conception of Argus as a two-faced monster with four eyes is found both in the earliest literary source (the *Aegimius*)²¹ and on paintings (the black-figure London amphora, n.8 above) that are earlier than the portrayal of a many-eyed giant.²²

¹⁹ LIMC V “Herakles,” nos. 2576, 2605.

²⁰ Could it have been adopted as a text standing in rivalry to Hesiod’s theogonic poetry? For other hypotheses regarding the plot of the *Aegimius* see L. H. Galiart, *Beiträge zur Mythologie bei Bakchylides* (Freiburg 1910) 115–116, 128; J. M. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (Cambridge 1997) 63; A. Debiasi, *L’Epica perduta: Eumelo, il Ciclo, l’occidente* (Rome 2004) 235–237.

²¹ The chorus in Cratinus’ comedy Πανόπτται (third quarter of the fifth century) was comprised of philosophers dressed as Argus(es): κρανία δισσὰ φορεῖν, ὀφθαλμοὶ δ’ οὐκ ἀριθματοί, “to have two heads and eyes were past number” (fr.161, transl. Storey [Loeb]; κρανία δισσὰ may equally mean “double heads,” as actors could be wearing a second mask on the back of the head). It seems impossible to decide whether Cratinus was inspired by an actual two-faced representation of the mythical Argus, or κρανία δισσὰ was his own invention designed to emphasize either the alleged omniscience of these philosophers or their keen attention to matters both above and below them. J.-M. Galy, “Les Panoptes englottogastres, ou la philosophie et les philosophes dans la comédie grecque des V^e et IV^e siècles,” *AFLNice* 35 (1979) 109–130, at 110 n.5, compares Ar. *Nub.* 185–193.

²² Two faces apparently represent universal vision (see R. Pettazzoni, *The All-Knowing God* [London 1956] 151), and the conception is naïve enough to have originated on Greek soil. Nevertheless, note a potential Near Eastern antecedent of Argus *bifrons* in the Babylonian *Epic of Creation* about the birth of Marduk:

3. While the two different traditions of representing Argus have long been known to scholars,²³ their chronological distribution has not attracted much discussion. Given the fragmentary nature of our evidence, definitive statements are risky, but on the face of it, all available sources for the Argus myth fall into two parts, with the sixth-century sources featuring a giant with four eyes and fifth-century sources depicting Argus with multiple eyes all over his body.²⁴ This realization allows us to pose the central question of this paper: how are we to account for the change that took place at the beginning of the fifth century, when Argus became $\mu\rho\rho\iota\omega\pi\acute{o}\varsigma$ both in the literary adaptations of the myth and on the vases?²⁵

<i>ḥasāsīš lā naṭā amāriš pašqā</i>	Impossible to understand, too difficult to perceive.
<i>4 īnīšu 4 uznišu</i>	Four were his eyes, four were his ears,
<i>šaplišu ina šutābuli 4Girru ittanpaḥ</i>	When his lips moved, fire blazed forth.
<i>irībū 4 ḥasīsā</i>	The four ears were enormous
<i>u īnī kī-ma šūātu ibarrā gimrēti</i>	And likewise the eyes; they perceived everything.

Enuma Eliš 1.94–8, ed. Lambert/Parker, transl. S. Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia*² (Oxford 2000).

²³ See e.g. E. Vinet, “Argus Bifrons,” *RA* 3 (1846) 309–320; Engelmann, *Jdl* 18 (1903) 37–58; A. B. Cook, *Zeus* II (Cambridge 1925) 379–380.

²⁴ Besides combinations of both representations (n.10 above), two more variations deserve mention. According to the mythographer Pherecydes, Hera placed a third eye in the back of Argus’ head (fr.66 Fowler, Ἄργος ὄψις Ἡρη ὀφθαλμῶν τρίτησιν ἐν τῷ ἰνίῳ καὶ τὸν ὕπνον ἐξαίρειται). Pherecydes’ version may well be a rationalizing spin-off from the ‘Janus’ model: the striking two-faced image is replaced by a somewhat simpler idea of one extra eye added by Hera (R. L. Fowler, *Early Greek Mythography* II [Oxford 2013] 241). On a ‘Northampton’ amphora in Munich of ca. 530, we find a third eye on Argus’ chest (Staatliche Antikensammlungen 585, *LIMC* “Io I,” no. 31). It has been observed that the third eye on Argus’ chest is depicted quite close to his left shoulder: this lack of symmetry has led to the assumption that a fourth eye should be expected on the right side of the giant’s body (M. Steinhart, *Das Motiv des Auges in der griechischen Bildkunst* [Mainz 1995] 121 n.21); if this hypothesis is correct, the painter was quite possibly relying on a version of the myth in which Argus had four eyes.

²⁵ Strictly speaking, the early fifth century is the time when the $\mu\rho\rho\iota\omega\pi\acute{o}\varsigma$ motif appears on vases; literary evidence is much less certain, since neither $\mu\rho\rho\iota\omega\pi\acute{o}\varsigma$ in Aesch. *Supp.* 303 nor $\beta\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\pi\omicron\nu\tau\alpha$ $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\omicron\theta\epsilon\nu$ in Bacchyl. 19.19 can

The only scholar to have tackled this question is H. Maehler, according to whom the idea of a many-eyed giant was simply extracted from Argus' epithet πανόπτης.²⁶ But this seems to me unlikely: the epithet is also used of Zeus²⁷ and Helios,²⁸ and neither deity is ever portrayed as many-eyed.²⁹ Argus' *polyophthalmia* is in fact unparalleled in the Greek world,³⁰ and one would like to see a stronger reason for the emergence of this novel conception than simply an etymological deduction from the epithet.

Since no explanation internal to Greek facts is readily forthcoming, this paper will argue that the shift in the representation of Argus is due to an external influence. In particular, the time period in which this shift is observed suggests the following hypothesis: the image of the myriad-eyed cowherd originated

guarantee more than four eyes, and μυριωπόν [Aesch.] *PV* 568 is of little use as the date of the play is unknown.

²⁶ "Eine Ausdeutung seines Beinames": H. Maehler, *Die Lieder des Bakchylides* II (Leiden 1997) 245.

²⁷ Aesch. *Eum.* 1045 παντόπτας, *Supp.* 139 πατήρ ὁ παντόπτας; Soph. *OC* 1085–1086 παντόπτα Ζεῦ; *OF* 492.6 (*PEG* II: gold leaf from Thuri) Ζεῦ [...] πανόπτα, 141.1 (a rhapsodic theogony) Ζεὺς ὁ πανόπτης; Hsch. π 372 πανόπτης· πολυόφθαλμος. Ζεύς; *BCH* 33 (1909) 445 Διφῶς Πανόπτα (Argos, III B.C.).

²⁸ [Aesch.] *PV* 91 ὁ παντόπτης Ἥλιος.

²⁹ Rather, Helios is itself the eye *par excellence*, cf. Pind. fr.52k μᾶτερ ὀμμάτων, Ar. *Nub.* 285 ὄμμα αἰθέρος, and Zeus has the sun as his eye (Hes. *Op.* 266 Διὸς ὀφθαλμός). Pace W. Burkert, *Homo Necans* (Berkeley 1983) 167, Pausanias' report about an idol (ξόανον) of Zeus with a third eye in the forehead (2.24.4) is irrelevant: the statue was located in a temple of Athena in the city of Argos, and the "overlying" of Zeus on the epichoric deity Argus is an eminently plausible hypothesis (see Pettazzoni, *All-Knowing God* 152).

³⁰ Nothing is known about the Athenian cult hero Πάνοψ (ἦρως Ἀττικός, Hsch. π 383; ἢ Πάνοπος κρήνη, Pl. *Lysis* 203A), and it would be pointless to speculate about his watchfulness; the same holds for Homeric personal name Πανοπεύς (also a city in Phocis). Both names may in fact contain the root of ἔπω as their second member, cf. H. von Kamptz, *Homerische Personennamen* (Göttingen 1982) 71, 123–124, comparing Hom. Ἠνιοπεύς.

around the start of the fifth century, inspired by mythological conceptions current in Achaemenid Iran.³¹

4. A historical context for Iranian influence was available since the mid-sixth century: by 547 (the fall of Sardis) the Persian empire encompassed the entire coast of Asia Minor. There was no iron curtain; on the contrary, Greek craftsmen of all kinds had access to the court of the Persian king and were involved in the Persian state at every level.³² The names of a few

³¹ Abbreviations: AVŚ = Atharvaveda (Śaunaka recension), PTT = *Persepolis Treasury Tablets*, RV = *Rigveda*, Vend. = *Vendidad*, Y. = *Yasna*, Yi. = *Yāšt*. Sigla for Old Persian inscriptions (DNa, DB, XPh, etc.) follow R. Schmitt, *Die altpersischen Inschriften der Achaimeniden* (Wiesbaden 2009).

³² To cite a few well-known examples from the sixth and early fifth century: Pytharchus of Cyzicus was rewarded by Cyrus the Great with seven cities (Agathocles *FGrHist* 472 F 6); Democedes of Croton was the first Greek physician at the court of Darius I (Hdt. 3.125–137) and others followed suit: Polycritus of Mende (Plut. *Artax.* 21.3), Apollonides of Kos (Ctesias *FGrHist* 688 F 14.42); another Pytharchus appears in a graffito of the end of the sixth century from one of the stone quarries of Persepolis (on this and other four Greek graffiti see G. Pugliese Carratelli, “Greek Inscriptions of the Middle East,” *E&W* 16 [1966] 31–36; note that in Darius’ inscription from Susa [DSf 48] Ionians are listed as stone-cutters); the explorer Scylax of Caryanda in the service of Darius I sailed down the Indus and rounded the Arabian peninsula for the first time (Hdt. 4.44); the architect Mandrocles built the pontoon bridge over the Bosphorus for Darius I (Hdt. 4.87); an Ionian (*yauna*) was an aide to Parnaka, the head of financial administration at Persepolis, from December 499 to September 498 (PTT 119–20; see D. M. Lewis, “Persians in Herodotus,” in *The Greek Historians: Literature and History. Papers presented to A. E. Raubitschek* [Saratoga 1985] 101–17, at 108); Greek mercenaries were serving in the Persian army at least from the very beginning of the fifth century, to judge from the Greek helmet buried in the Persian siege mound at Paphos dated 498 (A. H. Snodgrass, “A Corinthian Helmet from the Persian Siege Ramp at Palaepaphos,” in F. G. Maier [ed.], *Alt-Paphos auf Cypern* [Mainz 1984] 45–49, at 48). J. Hofstetter, *Die Griechen in Persien* (Berlin 1978) 191–192, lists the names of 42 Greeks for the sixth century alone. See also J. M. Balcer, “The Greeks and the Persians: The Process of Acculturation,” *Historia* 32 (1983) 257–267, at 260–262; M.-F. Baslez, “Présence et traditions iraniennes dans les cités de l’Egée,” *REA* 87 (1986) 137–155; C. Nylander, *Ionians in Pasargadae* (Uppsala 1970); M. J. Vickers, “Interactions between Greeks and Persians,” in H.

Persians who visited Athens are also known³³ and more must have gone. It was at that time that Greeks had an opportunity to be exposed to Persian religious ideas: Persian priests must have been active in Ionia, practicing their religion and discussing their beliefs. In fact several scholars, most notably W. Burkert and M. L. West, have convincingly argued that there was a considerable Iranian influence on Greek philosophy and literature during this period.³⁴ It is therefore not unreasonable to speculate that the discontinuity in the mythological tradition about Argus and the introduction of a clearly exotic element (myriads of eyes) might likewise be due to Persian influence.

Once this working hypothesis is adopted, we can offer a tentative answer to the question posited in §3 above: the many-eyed figure in Iranian mythology which served as a model for the fifth-century representation of Argus could be Miθra.³⁵ This deity is well established in the Iranian pantheon, and in the Zoroastrian scriptures (the Avesta) the standing epithet of Miθra is *baēuuarə.cašman*, ‘he who has ten thousand eyes’.

Sancisi-Weerdenburg and A. Kuhrt (eds.), *Center and Periphery* (Leiden 1990) 253–262. For an excellent survey of Greco-Persian relations in the fifth century see M. C. Miller, *Athens and Persia in the Fifth Century B.C.* (Cambridge 1997).

³³ Rhoisakes (Plut. *Cim.* 10.9), Zopyros Megabyxou (Hdt. 3.160.2), Artaphernes (Thuc. 4.50). According to Herodotus at least one of the fifty Persians invited to the banquet prepared by Attaginus of Thebes in 479 spoke Greek (Hdt. 9.16.2).

³⁴ W. Burkert, “Iranisches bei Anaximandros,” *RhM* 106 (1963) 97–134, and *Babylon. Memphis. Persepolis: Eastern Contexts of Greek Culture* (Cambridge 2004) 99–126; M. L. West, *Early Greek Philosophy and the Orient* (Oxford 1971). Iranian influence on Greece is accepted also by some Iranists, e.g. M. Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism II* (Leiden 1982) 150–163.

³⁵ The spelling Miθra has been adopted here to avoid confusion with the god of Roman Mithraic mysteries. Iranian Miθra was originally a pre-Zaraθustrian god of covenant (= Vedic *Mitrá-*), see A. Meillet, “Le dieu Indo-Iranien Mitra,” *JAI* 10 (1907) 143–159; P. Thieme, *Mitra and Aryaman* (New Haven 1957); H.-P. Schmidt, “Indo-Iranian Mitra Studies: The State of the Central Problem,” in *Etudes Mithriaques: actes du 2^e Congrès international* (Teheran/Leiden 1978) 345–393.

5. Before we discuss this and other possible parallels between Greek Argus and Persian Miθra in detail, a few remarks on the nature of the available evidence are in order. The religion of the early Achaemenids remains a vexing problem, as there is not a single text of primarily religious content among the epichoric sources for the study of the Achaemenid empire:³⁶ neither the royal rock-cut inscriptions in Old Persian nor the Elamite fortification and treasure tablets excavated in Persepolis nor the Aramaic inscriptions treat religious matters in any detail.³⁷ However, these sources occasionally mention Achaemenid deities, such as Auramazdā, who according to Herodotus was the main god in the Persian religion: this theonym was, of course, immediately equated with Ahura Mazda, known from the Avesta as the head of the Zoroastrian pantheon.³⁸

Nevertheless, some scholars have been cautious about viewing the Achaemenid Mazdaism and the Zoroastrian religion of the Avesta as equivalent; the problem is that the Avestan texts are notoriously hard to localize in time and space, and while the Avestan canon presents us with a wealth of religious information, it is devoid of any historical or geographic contextualization. But recently P. O. Skjærvø³⁹ was able to show

³⁶ Important recent discussions of Achaemenid religion are J. Kellens, "L'idéologie religieuse des inscriptions achéménides," *J.A.* 290 (2002) 417–464, and A. de Jong, "Religion at the Achaemenid Court," in B. Jacobs and R. Rollinger (eds.), *Der Achämenidenhof* (Wiesbaden 2010) 533–558.

³⁷ The famous Cyrus cylinder is a very important source of knowledge about religions of different nations in the Achaemenid empire, but no information can be drawn from it about Cyrus' own religious beliefs.

³⁸ The Achaemenid inscriptions and the Elamite texts also mention the deities Naryasanga, Ispandāramaiti, and Fraverti, all of whom find counterparts in the Avesta.

³⁹ P. O. Skjærvø, "Avestan Quotations in Old Persian? Literary Sources of the Old Persian Inscriptions," in S. Shaked and A. Netzer (eds.), *Irano-Judaica IV Studies relating to Jewish Contacts with Persian Culture* (Jerusalem 1999) 1–64, and "The Achaemenids and the Avesta," in V. S. Curtis and S. Stewart (eds.), *Birth of the Persian Empire* (London/New York 2005) 52–84.

through a careful analysis of Achaemenid royal inscriptions that not only is the ideology of these texts fully compatible with Avestan theology,⁴⁰ but they also contain almost direct quotations from the (then oral) Avestan tradition, including phrases found only in Younger Avestan texts.⁴¹ It is therefore methodologically warranted to draw on the Avestan canon for information about religious beliefs that may have been current among Persians in the early Achaemenid empire.⁴²

⁴⁰ The Old Persian texts mention such important elements of Avestan ideology as Lie (*drauga-*, *durujya-*) and Order (*artāvan-*); they stress the importance of discarding the old gods (*daivas*), just as the Avesta does. More complex correspondences can also be established: for instance, Skjærvø analyzes the passage DB 4.33–40 stating that (a) the lands were made rebellious by the Lie, (b) were delivered in the King's hands, and (c) must be punished so that the country stay healthy, and shows that all three elements of this passage are found in Y. 30.6–9.

⁴¹ To give a selection from Skjærvø's rich collection: *astiy a^rtar aitā dahayāva* [...] *ayaudanⁿ* [...] *ava dahayāvam adam ajanam utašim gāθavā nīšādayam*, “there were among these lands (some that) were in commotion [...] I smote that land and put it in its place” (XPh 30-33) ~ *Miθrō* [...] *daxiunqm yaozaiñtīš rāmaiieiti*, “Miθra pacifies those of lands that are in commotion” (Yt. 13.95); *marta artāvā ahanīy*, “let me be the follower of Order when dead” (XPh 47) ~ *ida aⁿhō ašauua* “(at the last turn of your life) here you shall be a follower of Order” (Y. 71.16); *paθīm tayām rāstām mā avā^harda*, “Do not abandon the straight path!” (DNa 60) ~ *γō dāⁿhō^h raxšūiñqīθiā para razištā baraiti*, “(Miθra) who carries away the straightest (paths) of the defiant country” (Yt. 10.27) and *razištahe paθō aēšəmca vaēdəmca*, “the search for and finding of the straightest path” (Y. 68.13); *ima hašiyam naiy duruxtam*, “this is true, not false” (Darius' oath in DB 4.44–45) ~ *vainīl* [...] *aršuxdō vāxš miθaoxtəm vūcim*, “may the correctly spoken word win over the false word” (Y. 60.5). Kellens, *JĀ* 290 (2002) 424, has made an attractive suggestion that Darius' own name, *Dārayavauš* ‘upholder of what is good’ (Old Persian *d-a-r-y-v-u-š*, Elamite *Darī-(y)a-ma-u-iš*), contains a reference to Y. 31.7 *xraθβā damiš ašəm dāraiiat vahištəm manō* “[as] creator he [conceived] truth with intellect, by which he upholds best thought,” while another royal name, *Artaxšaça* “whose reign is through order” (Artaxerxes) finds a close parallel in Y. 29.10 *dātā ašū xšaθrəmca*, “grant (2nd pl.) reign through order.”

⁴² That some people active at the Achaemenid court at a later time considered themselves Zoroastrians seems to follow from an Aramaic seal of the

There are compelling reasons to believe that Miθra, the purported inspiration for many-eyed Argus in Greek art and literature, was known and worshipped in Persepolis from early times on,⁴³ possibly in a military cult,⁴⁴ even though this god is not named in the inscriptions of Darius I and Xerxes I.⁴⁵ The evidence comes from onomastics: Old Persian personal names with *miθra-* are amply attested for the sixth and early fifth century.⁴⁶ The importance of these theophoric names goes beyond

fourth century B.C. depicting a fire altar and bearing an inscription *zrtštrš*, “Zaraθuštrian/follower of Zaraθuštra”: R. Schmitt, “Onomastica iranica symmicta,” in R. Ambrosini (ed.), *Scribthair a ainm n-ogaim: scríthi in memoria di Enrico Campanile* (Pisa 1997) 922–923.

⁴³ It is unclear how much trust one should place in Xenophon’s statement that Cyrus the Great swore by Miθra (*Cyr.* 7.5.53).

⁴⁴ See R. Frye, “Mithra in Iranian History,” in J. R. Hinnells (ed.), *Mithraic Studies: Proceedings of the First International Congress of Mithraic Studies II* (Manchester 1975) 62–67; P. Briant, “Forces productives, dépendance rurale et idéologies religieuses dans l’Empire achéménide,” in *Religions, pouvoir, rapports sociaux* (Paris 1980) 15–68, at 40–42. It is possible that Miθra was also worshipped under the name *Baga*, see N. Sims-Williams, “Mithra the Baga,” in P. Bernard and F. Grenet (eds.), *Histoire et cultes de l’Asie centrale préislamique* (Paris 1991) 177–186, who argued that Old Persian *Bāgayādi*, the name of the seventh month (= Middle Persian *Mihr*) was originally a name of a festival in honor of Miθra.

⁴⁵ It is not until Artaxerxes II (404–358) that Miθra is listed in royal inscriptions together with Auramazdā and Anahita (Ao. 1.4; Am. 4; Am. 1); as A. Dupont-Sommer has compellingly argued, “L’énigme du dieu ‘Satrape’ et le dieu Mithra,” *CRAI* 120 (1976) 648–660, Miθra appears on the trilingual inscription from the sanctuary of Leto in Xanthus (358 or 337 B.C.) as *hštrpty* (Iranian **xšaθrapati-* = Vedic Sanskrit *kṣatrapati-* *Mitra-*, *KŚS* 5.13.1).

⁴⁶ These names are found (1) in the Elamite tablets from Persepolis (e.g. *Mi-iš-ša-ba-da*, *Mi-iš-ša-ak-ka*, *Da-da-mi-iš-ša*, etc.); (2) in the Aramaic inscriptions on mortars and pestles for *haoma* preparation, likewise found in the Treasury at Persepolis (e.g. *dtmtr*, *mtrk*, *mtrpt*, etc.); (3) in Greek literary sources, e.g. Μιτραδάτης, the shepherd of Cyrus’ foster-father Astyages (Hdt. 1.110.1), Μιθραγάθης (or Μητρογαθής?) Aesch. *Pers.* 43, Μιθραδάτης, Cyrus’ trusted follower (Xen. *Anab.* 2.5.35), or Μιτραφέρνης (Ctesias F 6b). See R. Schmitt, *Iranisches Personennamenbuch V.2 Iranische Personennamen in der griechischen Literatur vor Alexander d. Gr.* (Vienna 2011) 261–266; (4) in Near Eastern literary sources, e.g. *Mtrdt*, Cyrus’ treasurer in Esra 1.8. ‘Mithraic’

mere confirmation that Miθra was known in the Achaemenid empire: in many cases these names can be analyzed as compressed references to expressions otherwise known from Avestan texts.⁴⁷

We can thus assume that the formulaic language of Miθraic worship in Achaemenid Persia was quite close to that found in the Avestan canon, and that it is possible to use Avestan texts in order to reconstruct conceptions of Persian popular religion (including the image of a myriad-eyed cowherd) which Greeks encountered in Asia Minor in the late sixth and early fifth century.

6. Let us now turn to the actual texts that may support the hypothesis of the Iranian origin of the motif of a many-eyed cowherd. Luckily we possess a whole hymn dedicated to Miθra, the Mihr-Yašt (Yt. 10), a text longer than Hesiod's *Theogony* and packed with information about Miθra. Crucially, the Avestan analogues of both Argus' epithets (μυριωπὸς βούτας, "myriad-eyed cowherd," [Aesch.] *PV* 568) are found in the stanza that serves as a refrain to the entire hymn, repeated verbatim thirty-four times (Yt. 10.7 ff.):⁴⁸

personal names are also attested in the Aramaic papyri from Elephantine (e.g. *mtrdt*, *mtryzn*), but the earliest of these attestations is datable to 446. See I. Campos Méndez "El dios Mithra en los nombres personales durante la dinastía persa aqueménida," *Aula Orientalis* 24 (2006) 165–175.

⁴⁷ For instance, *Miθra-dāta-* / *Dāta-Miθra-* "he who was given by Miθra" is reminiscent of Yt. 10.65 *yō puθrō.dā yō gaiiō.dā*, "[Miθra] who grants sons, who grants life"; *Miθra-farnah-*, "he who has *xʷarənah-* from Miθra," finds a parallel in Yt. 10.16 *yō vīspāhu karšuuōhu mainīiauuō yazatō vazaitē xʷarəno.dā*, "[Miθra,] the supernatural god who drives over all the continents bestowing *xʷarənah-*"; *Raiva-Miθra-*, "he who has wealth from Miθra," has a close analogue in Yt. 10.108 *kahmāi raēš* [...] *azəm baxšāni*, "to whom shall I be able to allot wealth?"; *Miθra-pāta-*, "protected by Miθra," makes reference to one of Miθra's most conspicuous functions as protector (*pāiiu-*), discussed below; etc. See R. Schmitt, "Die theophoren Eigennamen mit altiranisch *Miθra," in *Etudes Mithriaques* 395–456, at 413.

⁴⁸ Here and below the translation has been adopted from I. Gershevitch, *The Avestan Hymn to Mithra* (Cambridge 1959), although in some cases the

miθrām vouru.gaoiiaoitīm yazamaide
arš.vacaŋhəm viāxanəm
hazaŋra.gaošəm hutāštəm
baēuuarə.cašmanəm *bərəzantəm*
pərəθu.vaēdaiianəm sūrəm
axvafnəm jayauruuāŋhəm

We worship Miθra **of wide pastures**,
 whose words are correct, who is eloquent,⁴⁹
 who has a thousand ears, is well built,
who has ten thousand eyes, is tall,
 has a wide outlook, is strong,
sleepless, (ever) awake⁵⁰

That *baēuuarə.cašman-* “he who has ten thousand eyes” and *vouru.gaoiiaoitī-* “he who has (or bestows) wide cattle pastures” were standing epithets of Miθra can be seen in the very beginning of the Zoroastrian liturgy performed daily at the morning watch where all deities are invoked and invited to the sacrificial precinct in order to attend the *yasna*-ceremony (Y. 1.3):

niuuāēdaiiemi haŋkārāiemi
miθrahe vouru.gaoiiaotōiš

word order is changed in the interest of producing a parallel translation. The division into verse-lines, too, follows Gershevitch’s edition (it is absent from the manuscripts and thus is solely a matter of editorial decision).

⁴⁹ Gershevitch: “challenging.”

⁵⁰ Miθra’s epithets *jagāuruuah-* “wakeful” and *axvafna-* “sleepless” are clearly inherited from Common Indo-Iranian poetic tradition, cf. Vedic *jāgrvāmsā* (RV 1.136.3: Mitra-Varuṇa) and *āsvapnajo* (RV 2.27.9: Ādityas). The motif of thousands of eyes is likewise inherited, cf. the Vedic parallel AVŚ 4.16.4 *divā spāśaḥ prā carantīdām asya sahasrākṣā āti paśyanti bhūmim*, “from the sky his spies go forth hither; thousand-eyed, they look over the earth” (see H. Lommel, “Die Späher des Varuna und Mitra und das Auge des Königs,” *Oriens* 6 [1953] 323–333, at 330; the pronoun *asya* ‘his’ in this line refers to Varuṇa, whose fixed relationship with Mitra is well known: while the closely knit divine pair more or less remains as such in Vedic India, in Iran Miθra overshadows Varuṇa and as a result takes over some of his epithets). Lastly, Miθra’s epithet *vīspō.vīdūuā* “all-knowing” (Yt. 10.46), too, is an element of Indo-Iranian (and possibly Indo-European) hieratic language, see M. L. West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth* (Oxford 1997) 171–173.

hazayrō.gaošāhe baēuuarə.cašmanō
aoxtō.nāmanō yazatahe

I announce, I carry out [this sacrifice]
 to Miθra, **the lord of wide pastures**,
 who has a thousand ears, **has ten thousand eyes**,
 a deity whose name is spoken [in the sacrifice]⁵¹

The claim of this paper is that the image of Miθra as a god with ten thousand eyes (Avestan *baēuuarə.cašman-*) in the religion of Achaemenid Iran served as an inspiration for Ἄργος μυρτώπός in Greek literature and art. Like Argus, Miθra is a vigilant guardian who is closely associated with cows.

Miθra's vigilance is repeatedly emphasized: thus, in Yt. 10.11 among things warriors request from Miθra is *pouru.spaxšti-* (*tbišūantəm*), "much watchfulness (against enemies)"; from Yt. 10.45 we learn that his ten thousand eyes (given to him by Ahura Mazda, Yt. 10.82) are on every outlook (*vīspāhu vaēdaiianāhu*); and in Yt. 10.141 Miθra is watching even in the dark (*təmanhāda jiyāurum*). All this is quite similar to Argus' proverbial watchfulness.

Miθra is also the quintessential protector. This function is encoded by the root *pā(y)-* (same as in Greek πῶν or Latin *pastor*); compare, for instance, the dvandva compound *pāiūθβōrəštārā* "the Protector and Artisan" (Y. 42.2, 57.2), which in all likelihood refers to Miθra and Spənta Mainiiu.⁵² Another derivative from the same root is applied to Miθra in Yt. 10.46:

auuā pauuā pasca pauuā
parō pauuā spaš vīdaēta
 [...]

⁵¹ Note also Yt. 6.5: *yazāi miθrəm vouuru.gaoiiaoitīm hazayra.gaošəm baēuuarə.cašmanəm*, "I sacrifice to Miθra, the lord of wide pastures, who has a thousand ears, has ten thousand eyes." This epithet survives in the Parthian Manichaean texts as *hazār-čāšm* "thousand-eyed" (M. Boyce, "On Mithra in the Manichaean Pantheon," in W. B. Henning and E. Yarshater [eds.], *A Locust's Leg. Studies in Honour of S. H. Taqizadeh* [London 1962] 44–54, at 53).

⁵² See Gershevitch, *Avestan Hymn* 54–57; Spənta Mainiiu is the embodiment of Ahura Mazda's creative power and is thus appropriately referred to as Artisan (*θβōrəštār-* = Vedic *Tvāṣtar-*).

yō baēuuarə.spasanō sūrō
vīspō.vīduuī *adaoiiamnō*

protecting behind, protecting in front,
 a watcher and observer all around

[...]

(Miθra) a master of ten thousand spies, (who) is strong,
 all-knowing, undecivable.

Besides the epithets *pauuant-* and *vīspō.vīduuah-* this stanza is particularly interesting for one more reason. The expression *baēuuarə.spasanō* “a master of ten thousand spies” clearly cannot be separated from *baēuuarə.cašman-* “he who has ten thousand eyes” from the refrain to Yt. 10 cited above, and all commentators agree that Miθra’s eyes and ears are his servitors.⁵³ Now, it is unlikely to be entirely coincidental that we find the same idea recurring in the descriptions of Achaemenid Persian administration: the “king’s eye” famously was a title of a court official whose function probably was to inspect the satrapies and report to the king.⁵⁴ This title is also mentioned in Herodotus’ account of the game that ten-year-old Cyrus played with other Median boys (1.114.2).⁵⁵ If there is indeed a connection between the identical metaphors “eye = spy” found in Avestan ritual texts and in the historians’ accounts of the Persian kingdom, and the similarity is not merely typological or due to

⁵³ See e.g. Boyce, *History of Zoroastrianism* II 31.

⁵⁴ Less likely there were several officials with this title: the main reason for the controversy over the number of “King’s Eyes” is Xen. *Cyr.* 8.2.10–12.

⁵⁵ See J. M. Balcer, “The Athenian Episkopos and the Achaemenid ‘King’s Eye,’” *AJP* 98 (1977) 252–263; P. Briant, *Histoire de l’Empire perse: de Cyrus à Alexandre* (Paris 1996) 344. Nearly all evidence comes from Greek sources and this fact has given reason to doubt their reliability (see in particular S. W. Hirsch, *The Friendship of the Barbarians: Xenophon and the Persian Empire* [Hanover 1985] 131–139). However, that the Greek sources are at least partially trustworthy follows from an Elephantine papyrus which refers to a functionary called the *gwsšky*, “ear,” thus conforming to the Greek designation τὰ βασιλέως ὄτα (H. Schaeder, *Iranica* I [Berlin 1934] 1–24; R. Frye, *The Heritage of Persia* [London 1962] 103); unfortunately, there is nothing yet to corroborate the information about the “king’s eye.”

influence from an independent third source in each case,⁵⁶ we have a proof that some form of a litany to Miθra featuring his description as a ten-thousand-eyed deity (whether or not close to the Mihr-Yašt as we have it) was current in the Achaemenid empire.

To return to similarities between Argus and Miθra, we may further note the latter's particular interest in the protection of cattle, which becomes particularly apparent in stanzas 84 and 86 of the Mihr-Yašt (10.84 ~ 86):

bāda ustānazastō

zbañiiti auuaiñhe

(We worship Miθra whom...)

she (= the cow) regularly invokes

with outstretched hands for help⁵⁷

Even though Miθra's multiple eyes play no role in this passage, the association with the bovine is important, as it further strengthens the main hypothesis of this paper.

7. We have thus seen that there are a number of correspondences between Persian Miθra and Greek Argus in the fifth-century version of the myth: both creatures of divine origin have ten thousand eyes, are excellent guards, and are archetypal cowherds. Miθra's complex role in Iranian religion was not limited to these features and functions;⁵⁸ but it would be unreasonable to assume that Greeks conversing with the Persians would receive a complete and accurate account of their religion. Rather, one should assume *a priori* a garbled transmission of Persian religious beliefs to the Greeks, in the course of which Miθra was perceived as a divine protector of the cow who is always on guard using his myriads of eyes; he

⁵⁶ See A. L. Oppenheim, "The Eyes of the Lord," *JAOI* 88 (1968) 173–180, for Near Eastern parallels.

⁵⁷ The prominence of the (holy) cow in Zoroastrianism of course reflects the importance of the animal in early Indo-Iranian pastoralist society.

⁵⁸ See the references in n.35 above, discussing, *inter alia*, Miθra's role as the enforcer of covenants.

was therefore identified with Argus, which influenced the representation of the ever-watchful βουκόλος in the Greek myth. Such a conception of Miθra would appear quite simplistic to modern scholars, but so would the identification of Ahura Mazdā, the creator of the cosmos, with Zeus (Hdt. 1.131).

It is Miθra's role as the protector of the cow that must have played the key role in facilitating the importing of his features into the Greek myth. Let us imagine a situation in which a sixth-century Ionian or Athenian (or someone like Xanthus of Lydia) has just encountered the Persian religion and is seeking information at first hand from the Persians about their religious views and practices.⁵⁹ The cow would almost inevitably come up in such a hypothetical conversation, given its central role in the religion and community of Zoroastrians (who live "in the community of the milch cow," *gāuš vərəzəñē aziiā*, Y. 34.14). The inquisitive Greek may have learned that the cow is invoked as holy and beneficent (*Pursišnīhā* 33, *gao spənta gao hudā*). He may also have learned that one of the tenets that constitute the Zoroastrian creed, the *Fravarānē*, is the belief in the beneficent cow (*varanā gāuš hudā*, Y. 12.7). He may have further learned that Ahura Mazdā, certainly one of the central topics of this hypothetical discourse, is the creator of the cow and the cow belongs to him.⁶⁰ If our Greek were exposed to any genuine pieces of the liturgy, it may have been the most sacred prayer *Ahuna Vairya* in which Ahura Mazdā is designated a

⁵⁹ Such a conversation, whatever its language may have been, should not surprise us, any more than the one Plato had with a "Chaldaean" who came to stay with him during his final hours (Philod. *Index Acad. Herc.* 3.34–43 col. 5 Gaiser); "Chaldaean" here stands for a Persian magus, see P. Kingsley, "Meetings with Magi: Iranian Themes among the Greeks, from Xanthus of Lydia to Plato's Academy," *JRAS* 5 (1995) 173–209, at 199–203.

⁶⁰ Y. 12.1 *ahurāi mazdāi vīspā vohū cinahmī* [...] *yejhē gāuš yejhē ašəm yejhē raocā yejhē*, "I assign all good to Ahura Mazdā whose is the cow, whose is Order, whose is light"; Y. 12.4 *ahurō mazdā yē gəm dadā*, "Ahura Mazdā who created the cow."

cowherd (*vāstar-*, Y. 27.13).

These speculations could be continued, but I would focus on the ingredients that could be extracted from this conversation. We know that Greek habit of *interpretatio* led to identification of Ahura Mazdā with Zeus: as a result, our Greek may have understood that the Persian Zeus has a special relationship with a (divine?) cow, endowed with speech, who is also protected by a myriad-eyed guardian (Miθra). In this form the Iranian set-up maps perfectly onto the Greek myth about Argus, the all-seeing guardian of Io.⁶¹

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